THE CONFESSION

A MARVEL® COMICS EVENT

CIVIL WAR™

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BENDIS

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CIVIL WAR
THE CONFESSION

A Superhuman Registration Act has been passed, requiring all individuals possessing paranormal abilities to register their powers and identities with the government. Disagreement over the Act split the super hero community in two, with Tony Stark, Iron Man, as the figurehead of the pro-registration faction, and Steve Rogers, Captain America, leading the anti-registration rebellion. The conflict erupted into violence, only ending with the surrender and arrest—and eventual assassination—of Captain America.

Now, the Civil War is over, and Tony Stark has been named the Director of S.H.I.E.L.D., the international peacekeeping force. He has set into motion THE INITIATIVE, a plan for training and policing super heroes in this brave new world.

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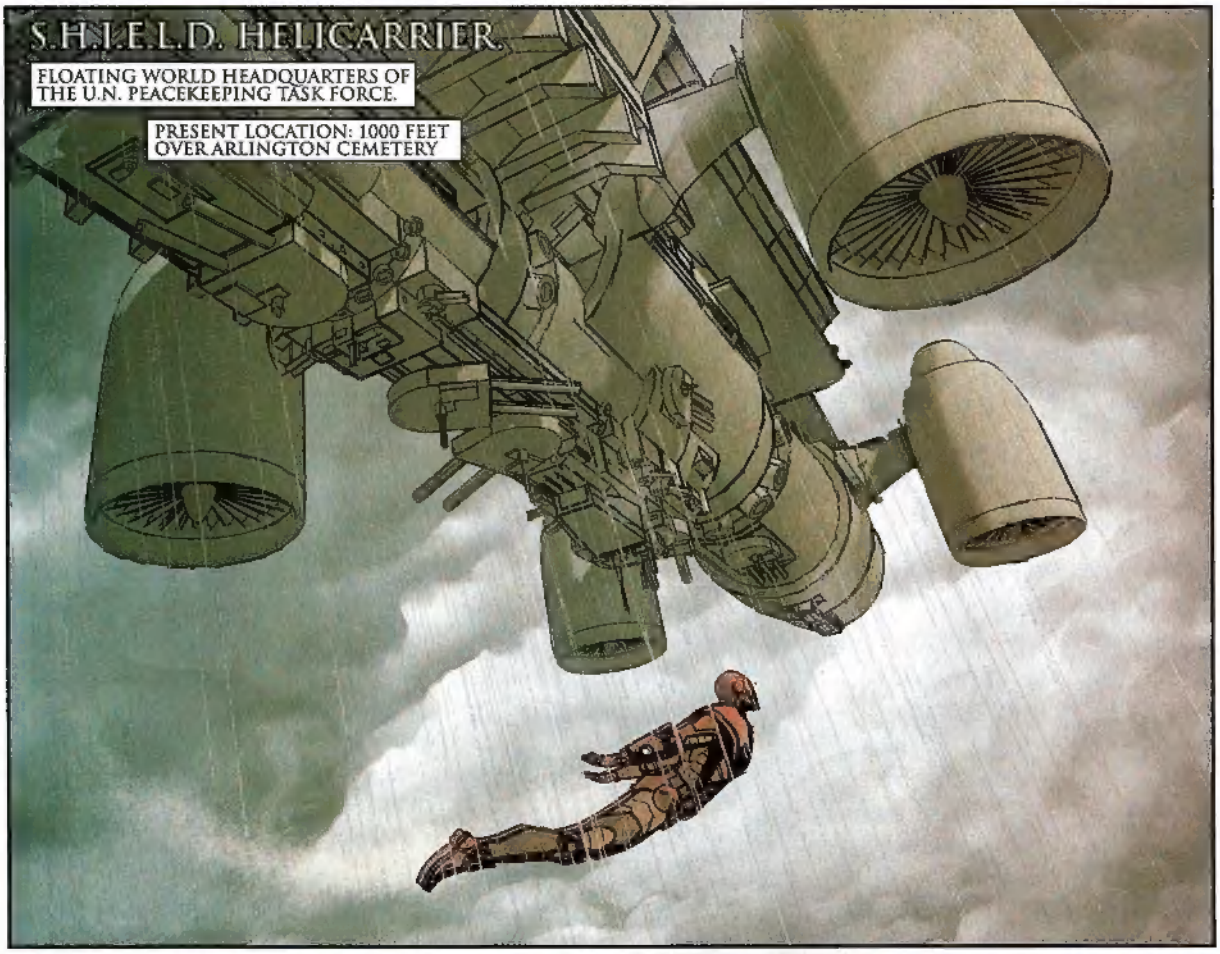
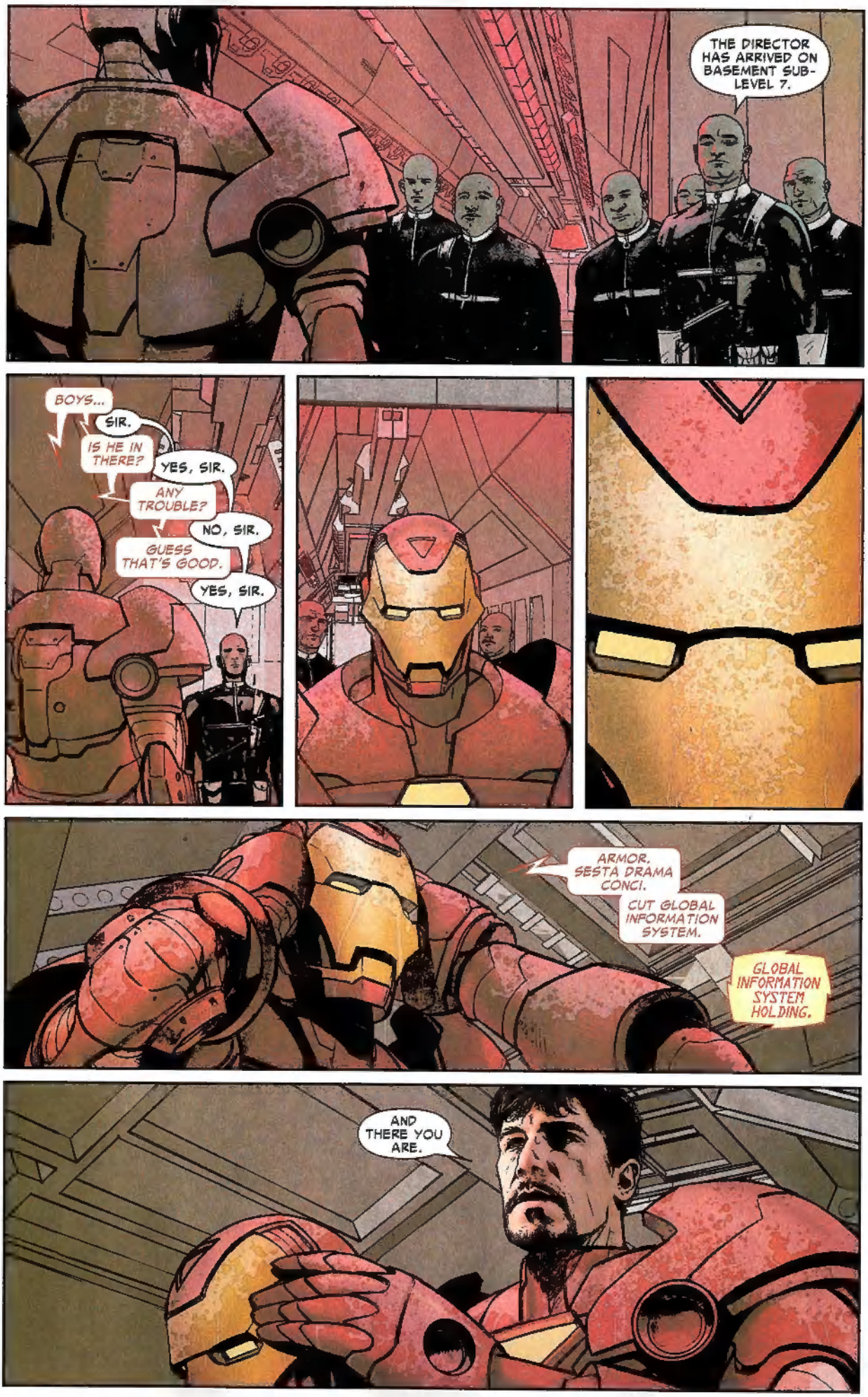
THE CONFESSION


S.H.I.E.L.D. HELICARRIER.
FLOATING WORLD HEADQUARTERS OF THE U.N. PEACEKEEPING TASK FORCE.
PRESENT LOCATION: 1000 FEET OVER ARLINGTON CEMETERY


THE DIRECTOR HAS ARRIVED ON BASEMENT SUB-LEVEL 7.
BOYS...
SIR.
IS HE IN THERE?
YES, SIR.
ANY TROUBLE?
NO, SIR.
GUESS THAT'S GOOD.
YES, SIR.
ARMOR. SESTA DRAMA CONCI.
CUT GLOBAL INFORMATION SYSTEM.
GLOBAL INFORMATION SYSTEM HOLDING.
AND THERE YOU ARE.

CAN YOU FEEL IT OUT THERE?
THESE KIDS?
THEY'LL SALUTE AND FOLLOW ORDERS, BUT YOU CAN *FEEL* IT.
THEY'RE NICK FURY'S KIDS.
THEY DON'T *LIKE* ME HERE AND THEY DON'T *WANT* ME HERE.
THEY WANT THEIR DADDY BACK AND THAT'S THAT.
GUESS THEY'LL HAVE TO *LEARN* TO LOVE ME.
YOU DID.
EH. IT'S *MY* FAULT, I MADE A TERRIBLE SPEECH TO THE COMMAND CREW.
I WAS TRYING TO MAKE A *POINT* AND I--I TOLD THEM ABOUT KING PYRRHUS OF EPIRUS.
YOU KNOW WHO HE IS, RIGHT?
(YOU *PROBABLY* KNOW WHO HE IS.)
HE DEFEATED THE ROMANS DURING THE PYRRHIC WAR AT HERACLEA AND AGAIN AT THIS PLACE CALLED ASCULUM.
AND *THAT* WAR WENT ON FOREVER AND EVER AND THE CASUALTIES WERE *DEVASTATING*...
BODIES FROM BOTH SIDES LYING AS FAR AS THE EYE COULD SEE...
HIS *FRIENDS* WERE ALL DEAD, HIS *COMMANDERS* WERE ALL DEAD...
THOSE WHO WERE STILL ALIVE STARTED HIGH-FIVING EACH OTHER OVER THE *VICTORY*, BUT...
KING PYRRHUS JUST STOOD THERE AND SAID: "*ONE MORE SUCH VICTORY WOULD UTTERLY UNDO ME.*"
MEANING THAT, WELL, *YOU* KNOW WHAT IT MEANS...
IT MEANS THERE'S WINNING AND THERE'S *WINNING* AND SOMETIMES WINNING DOESN'T FEEL LIKE WINNING.
IT FEELS LIKE ALMOST *LOSING*.
OR WE MIGHT *AS WELL* HAVE LOST IF *THIS* IS WHAT IT COSTS.
I *SAID* THIS TO MY NEW COMMAND BECAUSE I WANTED THEM TO KNOW HOW THIS FELT TO *ME*.
AND THEY LOOKED AT ME LIKE I DUMPED IN THEIR BREAKFAST BOWLS.
I WAS *TRYING* TO SAY--I WANTED THEM TO KNOW THAT I KNEW THE *REALITY* OF THIS. I KNEW HOW EVERYONE WAS FEELING.
BUT IT JUST CAME OFF LIKE I WAS CRITICIZING THEM FOR THEIR EFFORT.
THERE'S A WAY TO SPEAK TO SOLDIERS.
TO *RALLY* THEM, AND I--I DON'T HAVE IT.
I DON'T HAVE IT.
OKAY, LISTEN, THAT'S NOT WHAT I CAME HERE TO TELL YOU.
I--I CAME HERE TO TELL YOU *WHY* ALL THIS HAPPENED.
YOU ASKED ME AND I'M GOING TO TELL YOU.
IT WAS BECAUSE OF KING ARTHUR.

"A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO DOCTOR DOOM AND I HAD A RATHER HOSTILE RUN-IN THAT ENDED UP WITH THE BOTH OF US (AS ONLY CAN HAPPEN TO US) BEING ACCIDENTALLY TRANSPORTED BACK IN TIME TO KING ARTHUR'S ENGLAND.

"I *MET* KING ARTHUR.

"ME--WHO BASED THE ENTIRE THEME OF IRON MAN ON AN ARCHETYPE *HE* PERFECTED.

"I MET KING ARTHUR!!

"WE'VE ALL MET PEOPLE WE ADMIRE AND SOMETIMES MEETING THEM IS *GARGANTUALLY* DISAPPOINTING.

"BUT NOT *THIS* TIME. I MET THE GREATEST LEADER OF MEN.

"BUT I KEPT MY COOL AND SO DID HE.

"I MEAN, NOT THAT IT WAS SO EXCITING FOR HIM TO MEET *ME*, BUT CLEARLY HE WAS SCARED TO DEATH OF ME AND WHAT HE PROBABLY SAW AS MY 'DEVIL' ARMOR.

"AND WHILE I'M BONDING WITH ARTHUR, DOCTOR DOOM IS OUT THERE SOMEWHERE BONDING WITH MORGAN LE FEY OF THE EVIL $%#@ING #!%## LE FEYS AND THEY START A ZOMBIE WAR.

"OF *COURSE!!* RIGHT? IT'S DOOM!

"WHY TAKE THIS MIRACLE OF AN OPPORTUNITY TO GO SIGHT-SEEING OR ON SOME SORT OF SOCIOLOGICAL EXPEDITION IN A TIME LONG LOST...WHEN YOU CAN START A ZOMBIE WAR!!

"BUT *REALLY*, AT MY MOST SELFISH, I *THANK* HIM FOR IT.

"BECAUSE THE ONLY THING GREATER THAN *MEETING* KING ARTHUR WAS *FIGHTING* ALONGSIDE HIM.

"AND THERE WE WERE, IN THE MUD, IN THE MUCK, WITH THE STENCH OF DEATH AND THE SOUND OF VICTORY CRIES AND--

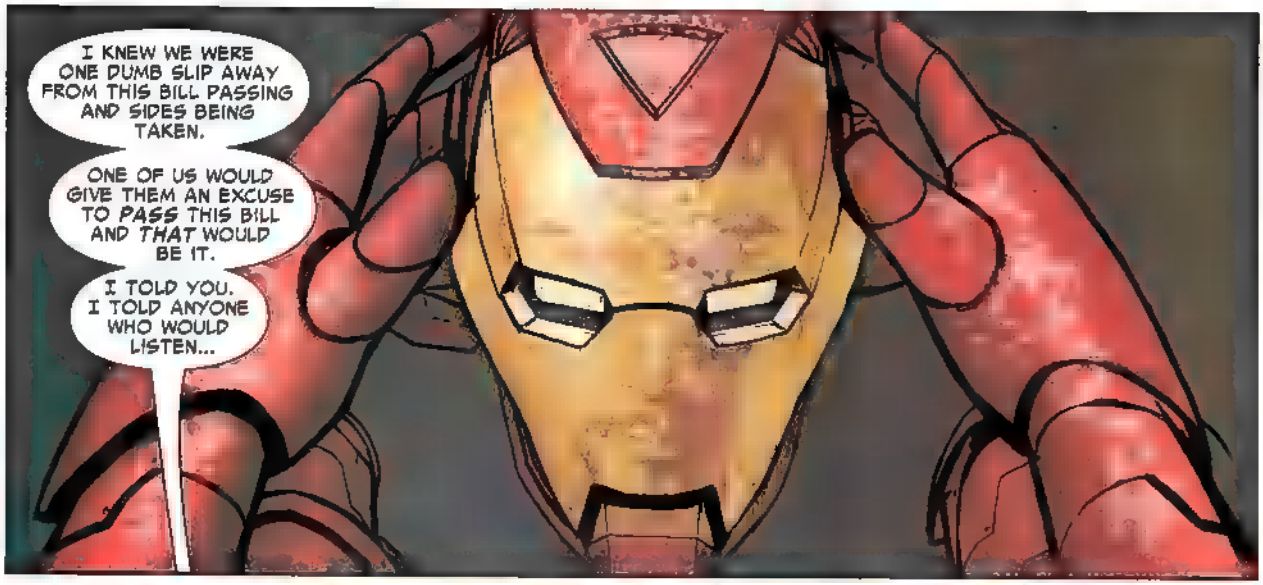
"AND THAT'S WHEN I SAW IT."

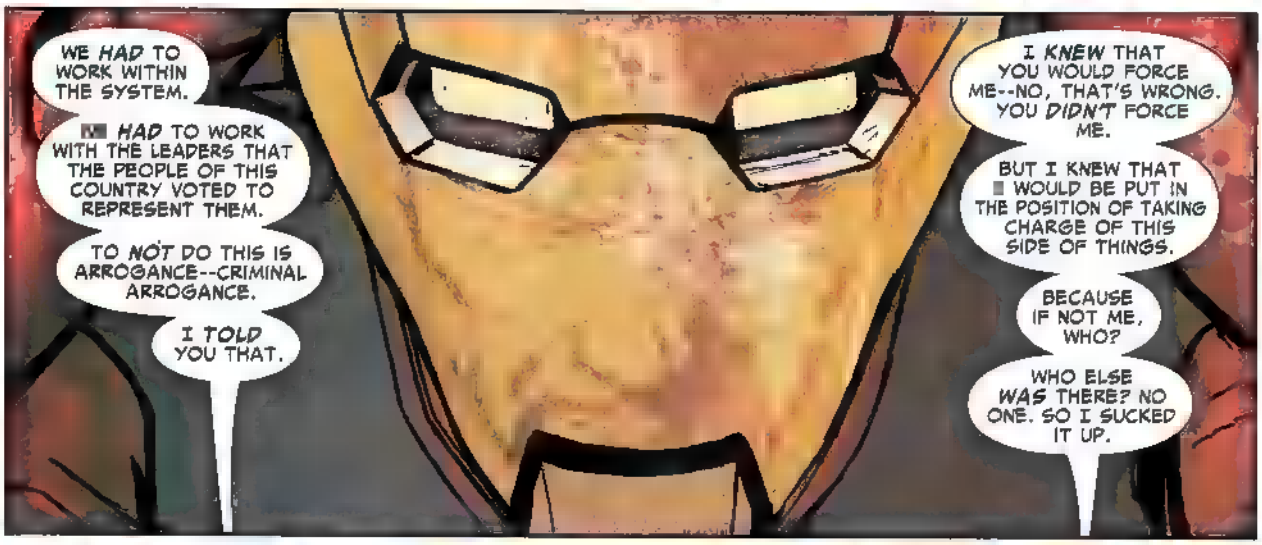
I SAW IT AS CLEAR AS DAY.
I SAW US.
AT WAR.
"IT HAD NEVER OCCURRED TO ME BEFORE THAT *VERY* MOMENT.
"BUT RIGHT THEN, I KNEW WE WERE GOING TO WAR.
"WE'RE WARRIORS, WITH WEAPONS AND IDEALS AND THINGS TO FIGHT FOR-- THINGS WORTH *DYING* FOR.
"IT'S *WHO* WE ARE, ITS OUR DEFINING CHARACTERISTIC. WE *FIGHT*.
"THE AVENGERS AVENGE, X-MEN DEFEND, THE FANTASTIC FOUR EXPLORE.
"BUT WE *ALL* FIGHT.
"AT FIRST I THOUGHT *WE'D* BE FIGHTING A WAR AGAINST EVIL.
"BUT THAT'S JUST THAT HOLIER-THAN-THOU ATTITUDE THAT *WE'RE* ALWAYS THE GOOD GUYS AND ALL *WE* FIGHT IS BAD GUYS.
"BUT IN A *WAR* THERE *ARE* NO GOOD GUYS AND THERE *ARE* NO BAD GUYS...
"THERE'RE OPPOSING FORCES."
A WAR WAS COMING...
I SAW US FIGHTING EACH OTHER.

"I SAW THE WAR.
"I KNEW IT WOULD HAPPEN."
I'VE TOLD YOU--THIS IS WHAT I DO.
I'M AN INVENTOR. I CAN ENVISION THE FUTURE.
I CAN SEE WHAT THE WORLD WILL LOOK LIKE, AND I CAN SEE WHAT THE WORLD WILL NEED TO MAKE THAT FUTURE WORTH LIVING FOR.
I SEE WHAT WE WILL NEED AND I INVENT THE THING THAT WILL HELP US GET THERE.
THAT'S HOW I INVENTED MY ARMOR, THAT'S HOW THE AVENGERS WERE BORN.
THAT'S HOW EVERY IDEA I'VE EVER HAD IN THE WORLD HAS COME TO BE.
I INVENT A SOLUTION.
I KNEW THERE WOULD BE A WAR OF HEROES. I KNEW IT.

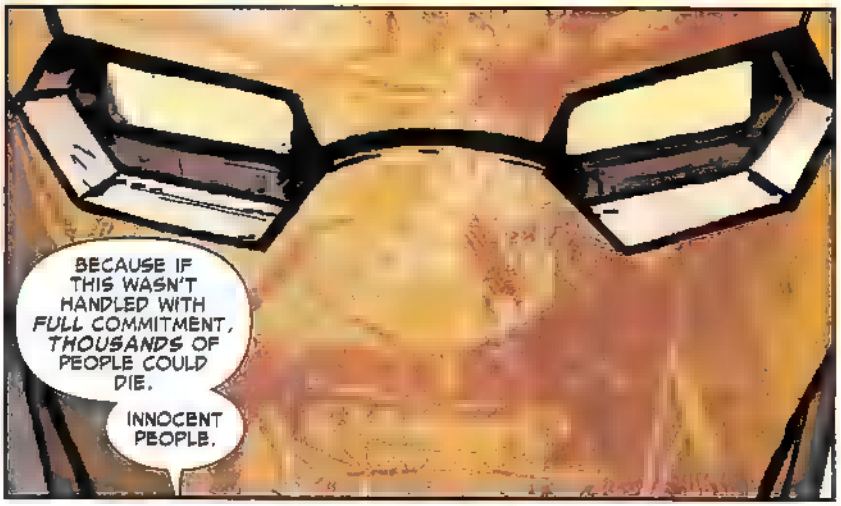
SO WHAT'S THE SOLUTION TO *THAT?*
I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT THE WAR WAS GOING TO BE *ABOUT* OR *WHEN* IT WAS COMING--
--BUT I KNEW I'D *KNOW* IT WHEN I *SAW* IT.
"I TRIED TO GET EVERYONE GATHERED. TO MAKE A PLACE WHERE WE COULD ALL GOVERN EACH OTHER.
"I TRIED TO STOP THIS WAR BEFORE IT EVEN GOT STARTED, BEFORE I EVEN KNEW IT WAS COMING.
"BUT I COULDN'T DO IT.
"ALL I GOT BACK WAS COMPROMISE AND HALF-TRUST.
"AND I *KNEW* MY FEARS WERE REAL EVEN THOUGH NO ONE WOULD BELIEVE ME.
"I KNOW HOW IT *SOUNDS.*
"I KNEW CONFESSING IT TO ANYONE, INCLUDING YOU, WOULD BE MET WITH A FRIENDLY LAUGH AND JUST...CONDESCENSION...
"SO I KEPT IT TO MYSELF."
SO I WENT ABOUT MY LIFE. FOR YEARS, I *WAITED*...FOR THE FIRST SIGN.
BUT NOTHING. JUST OUR USUAL CRAZY.
THEN I STARTED TO SEE A SHIFT, NOT IN US AS HEROES OR AVENGERS.
BUT IN THE WAY PEOPLE *REACTED* TO US.
THEY STARTED TAKING US FOR GRANTED. THEY STARTED SEEING US AS *FAMILIAR.*
THEY STARTED *RELYING* ON US TO HELP THEM INSTEAD OF *HOPING* WE WOULD.
THEY DIDN'T *KNOW* THEY *WERE* DOING IT, BUT THEY WERE--THEY WERE TAKING IT ALL FOR *GRANTED.*
AND WITH FAMILIARITY... CONTEMPT.
"THIS IS AND ALWAYS WILL BE A SOCIETY THAT BUILDS PEOPLE UP TO TEAR THEM DOWN.
"NOTHING NEW THERE. ALL THAT IS FINE AND GOOD...
REGISTRATION ACT
"BUT FOR ALL MY PREDICTING THE FUTURE AND KNOWING AND FEELING THE MOOD IN THE AIR...
"I *DIDN'T* SEE THIS COMING.

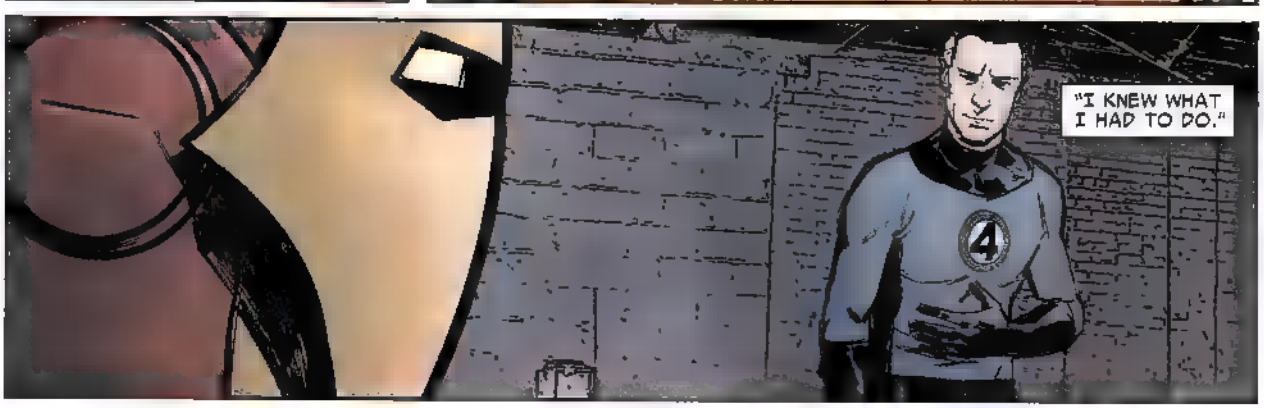
"BUT I KNEW *THIS* WAS IT.
"THIS.
"I KNEW WHAT IT MEANT.
"I KNEW IT WOULD PASS.
"I KNEW EXACTLY WHO WOULD FALL ON WHAT SIDE OF THE ISSUE.
"(EXCEPT PETER. PETER SURPRISED ME.)
"I KNEW MY FEELINGS.
"I KNEW YOUR FEELINGS.
"I KNEW THIS WAS IT."


I KNEW WE WERE ONE DUMB SLIP AWAY FROM THIS BILL PASSING AND SIDES BEING TAKEN.
ONE OF US WOULD GIVE THEM AN EXCUSE TO *PASS* THIS BILL AND *THAT* WOULD BE IT.
I TOLD YOU. I TOLD ANYONE WHO WOULD LISTEN...


WE *HAD* TO WORK WITHIN THE SYSTEM.
[redacted] *HAD* TO WORK WITH THE LEADERS THAT THE PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY VOTED TO REPRESENT THEM.
TO *NOT* DO THIS IS ARROGANCE--CRIMINAL ARROGANCE.
I *TOLD* YOU THAT.
I *KNEW* THAT YOU WOULD FORCE ME--NO, THAT'S WRONG. YOU *DIDN'T* FORCE ME.
BUT I KNEW THAT [redacted] WOULD BE PUT IN THE POSITION OF TAKING CHARGE OF THIS SIDE OF THINGS.
BECAUSE IF NOT ME, WHO?
WHO ELSE *WAS* THERE? NO ONE. SO I SUCKED IT UP.

"I DID WHAT *YOU* DO.
"I COMMITTED.


BECAUSE IF THIS WASN'T HANDLED WITH *FULL* COMMITMENT, *THOUSANDS* OF PEOPLE COULD DIE.
INNOCENT PEOPLE.


"I KNEW WHAT I HAD TO DO."

THE GOOD NEWS IS...THROUGH ALL OF THIS..
I NEVER TOOK A DRINK!
AND IF I DIDN'T DRINK DURING THIS, I'M PROBABLY NEVER GOING TO...
SO THERE'S THAT...
TO DO WHAT I NEEDED TO DO TO WIN THIS QUICKLY--
I KNEW THAT MEANT YOU AND I WOULD PROBABLY [redacted] SPEAK AGAIN.
OR BE FRIENDS AGAIN. OR PARTNERS AGAIN.
I TOLD MYSELF [redacted] WAS OKAY WITH IT BECAUSE I KNEW I WAS RIGHT AND I--I KNEW IT WAS SAVING LIVES.
IT WAS!! IT WAS THE RIGHT THING TO DO!
AND--AND--AND I WAS WILLING TO GET [redacted] WITH PEOPLE [redacted] DESPISE TO GET THIS DONE.
AND I KNEW THE WORLD FAVORS THE UNDERDOG AND THAT I WOULD BE THE BAD GUY.
I KNEW THIS AND [redacted] SAID I WAS OKAY WITH IT.
AND--AND EVEN THOUGH I SAID...
EVEN THOUGH I SAID [redacted] WAS WILLING TO GO ALL THE WAY WITH IT...
I WASN'T.
AND--AND I KNOW THIS BECAUSE THE WORST HAS HAPPENED.
THE THING I CAN'T LIVE WITH... HAS HAPPENED.
AND FOR ALL OUR BACK AND FORTH--AND ALL THE THINGS WE'VE SAID AND DONE TO EACH OTHER...
FOR ALL THE HARD QUESTIONS I'VE HAD TO ASK, AND TERRIBLE LIES I'VE HAD TO TELL...
THERE'S ONE THING THAT I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO TELL ANYONE NOW.
NOT MY FRIENDS OR MY CO-WORKERS OR MY PRESIDENT...
THE ONE THING!!
THE ONE THING [redacted] SHOULD HAVE TOLD YOU.
BUT NOW I CAN'T...

THE END

IT WASN'T WORTH IT.

THE CONFESSION

TWO DAYS AGO

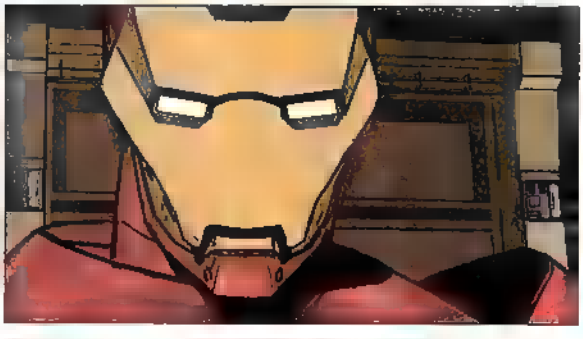
DUDE. STOP SALUTING.
NOT ANYMORE.
IT'S CAPTAIN AMERICA.

HOW OLD ARE YOU, SON?

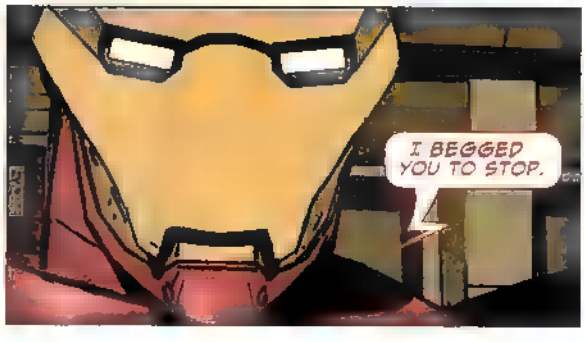
UH...
22.
I'M EIGHTY-FIVE.
WHOA.
YEAH.
YOU SHOULD, LIKE, I DON'T KNOW, WRITE A *BOOK*.
MAYBE I SHOULD.
PROBABLY WON'T HAVE TIME.
YOU HAVE ALL THE TIME IN THE *WORLD*.
(I MEAN, YOU KNOW.)
SON, I'M GOING TO [redacted] TRIED FOR TREASON AND HUNG.

THEY DON'T HANG PEOPLE ANYMORE.
SURE THEY DO.
BUT...
NOT YOU.
NO GUNS?
OH, UH, THEY'RE SIGNATURE PULSE CHARGERS.
THEY ONLY WORK FOR THE PERSON WHOSE FINGERPRINTS [redacted] DIGITALLY ASSIGNED TO THE WEAPON.
SO SOMEONE LIKE YOU, UH, CAN'T KICK THE GUN OUT OF MY HAND--
CUZ, UH, I GUESS YOU TEND TO DO THAT.
HE'S THOUGHT OF EVERYTHING, HASN'T HE?
WELL, SIR, IF I MAY SPEAK FREELY, HE'S KIND OF A--
DIRECTOR ON DECK.

WILL YOU EXCUSE US?
Y-YES, SIR.

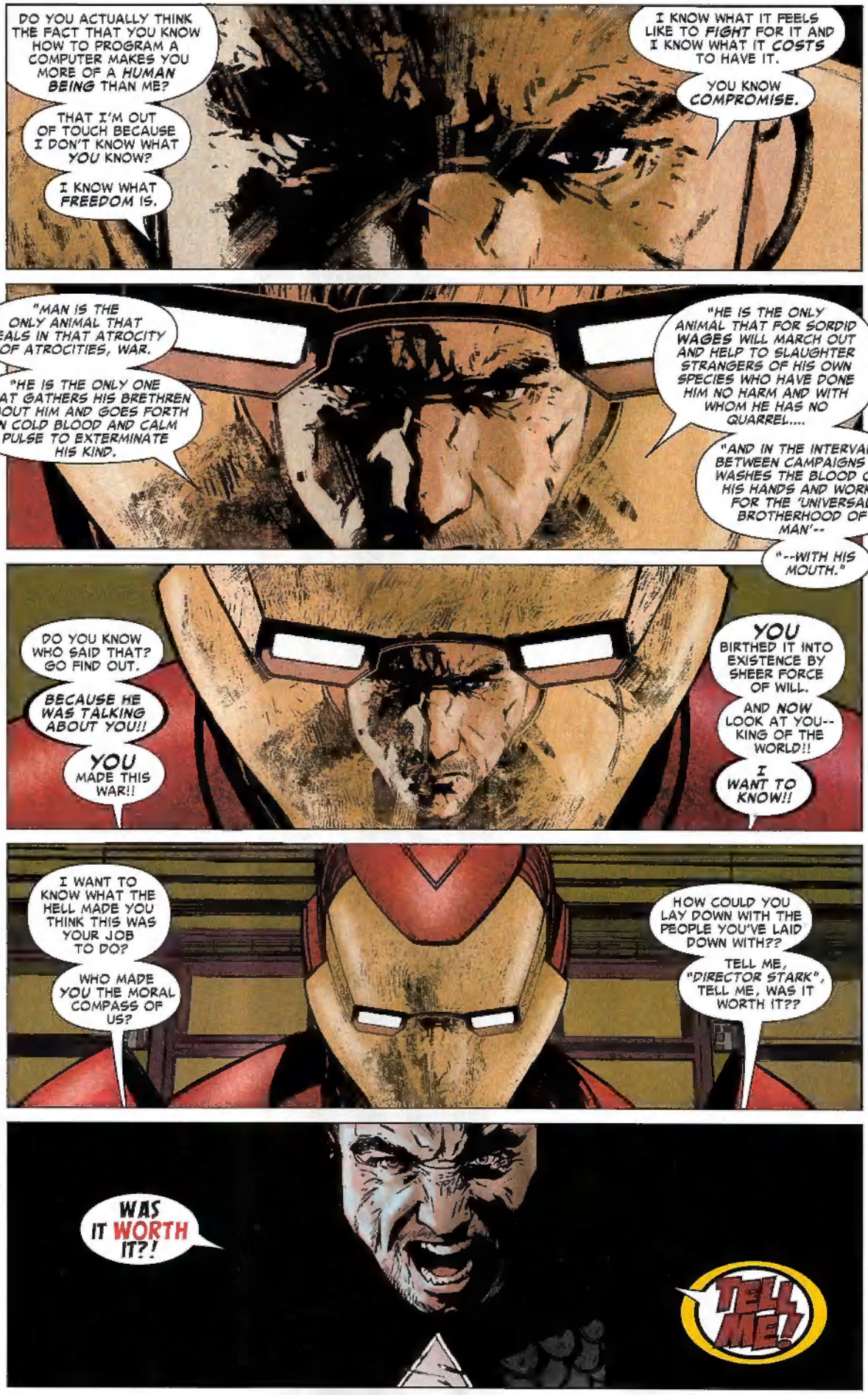


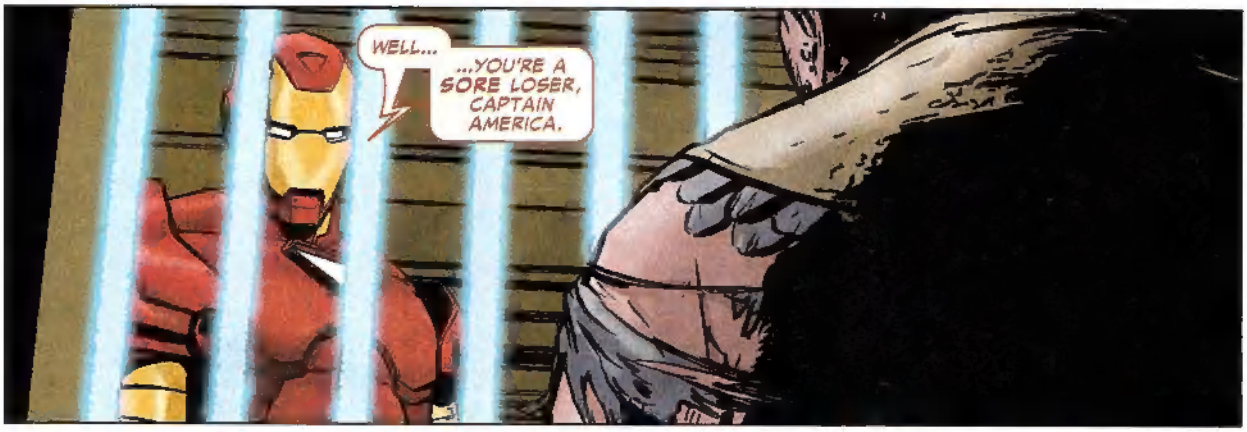
WHAT?

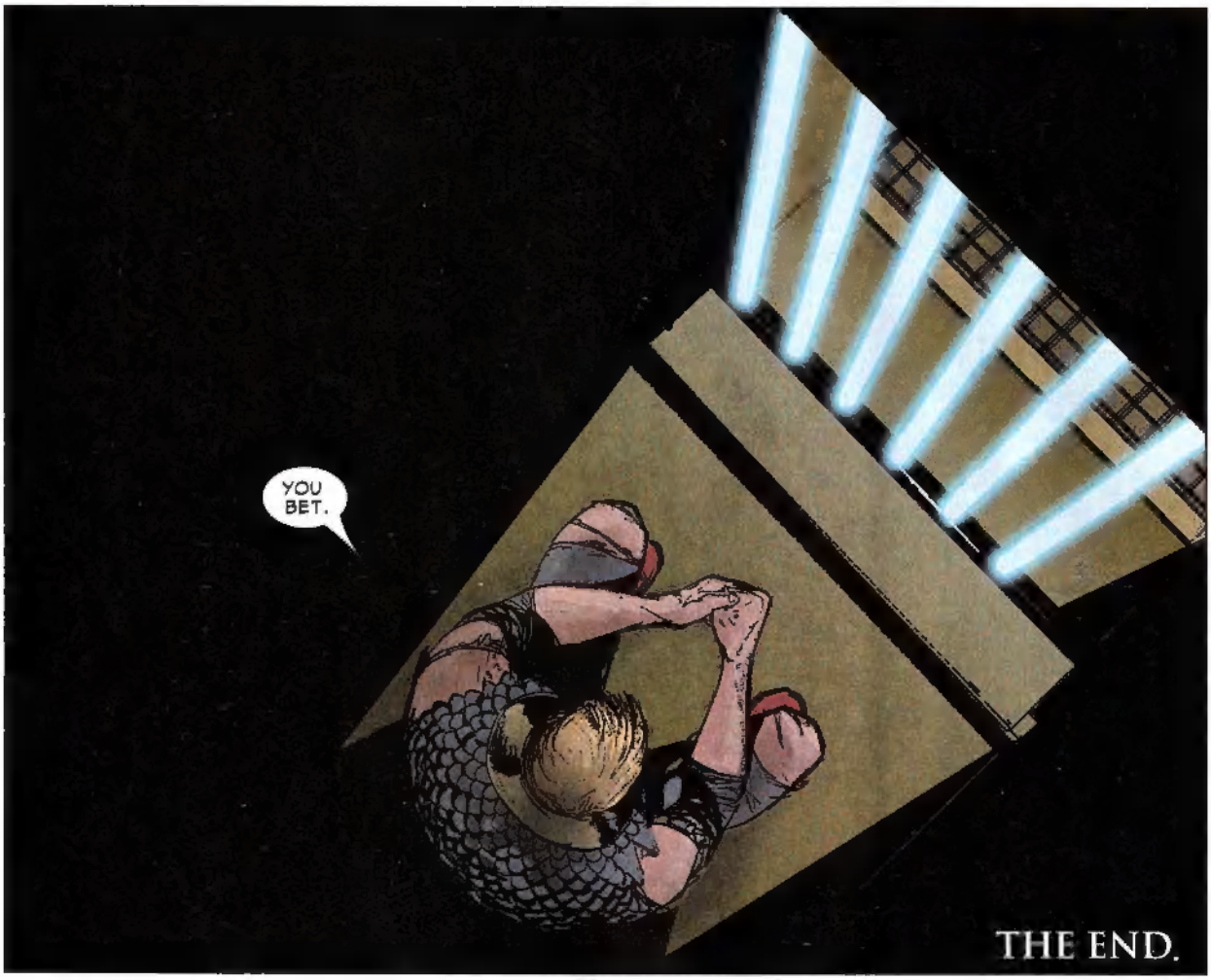

I BEGGED YOU TO STOP.

[redacted] I THINK YOU MAY [redacted] MENTALLY ILL.
YOU THINK I'M OLD. OUT OF TOUCH. DELUDING MYSELF. YOU'VE MADE THAT PERFECTLY CLEAR, AND MAYBE I AM.
BUT YOU'RE AN ILL MAN.
DO YOU KNOW THAT?
YOU HAVE A NEW SUIT YOU CAN'T CONTROL, [redacted] POWERS YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND--
NO.
I HAVE POWERS YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND.
I UNDERSTAND THEM FINE.
IF THAT WERE TRUE...
THEN YOU WOULD HAVE WON.

DO YOU THINK THE FACT THAT I'M IN HERE MEANS YOU WON?
UH, YES.
WE MAINTAINED THE PRINCIPLES WE SWORE TO DEFEND AND PROTECT.
YOU SOLD YOUR PRINCIPLES.
YOU LOST THIS BEFORE IT STARTED.


DO YOU ACTUALLY THINK THE FACT THAT YOU KNOW HOW TO PROGRAM A COMPUTER MAKES YOU MORE OF A HUMAN BEING THAN ME?
THAT I'M OUT OF TOUCH BECAUSE I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU KNOW?
I KNOW WHAT FREEDOM IS.
I KNOW WHAT IT FEELS LIKE TO FIGHT FOR IT AND I KNOW WHAT IT COSTS TO HAVE IT.
YOU KNOW COMPROMISE.
"MAN IS THE ONLY ANIMAL THAT DEALS IN THAT ATROCITY OF ATROCITIES, WAR.
"HE IS THE ONLY ONE THAT GATHERS HIS BRETHREN ABOUT HIM AND GOES FORTH IN COLD BLOOD AND CALM PULSE TO EXTERMINATE HIS KIND.
"HE IS THE ONLY ANIMAL THAT FOR SORDID WAGES WILL MARCH OUT AND HELP TO SLAUGHTER STRANGERS OF HIS OWN SPECIES WHO HAVE DONE HIM NO HARM AND WITH WHOM HE HAS NO QUARREL....
"AND IN THE INTERVALS BETWEEN CAMPAIGNS HE WASHES THE BLOOD OFF HIS HANDS AND WORKS FOR THE 'UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD OF MAN'--
"--WITH HIS MOUTH."
DO YOU KNOW WHO SAID THAT? GO FIND OUT.
BECAUSE HE WAS TALKING ABOUT YOU!!
YOU MADE THIS WAR!!
YOU BIRTHED IT INTO EXISTENCE BY SHEER FORCE OF WILL.
AND NOW LOOK AT YOU-- KING OF THE WORLD!!
I WANT TO KNOW!!
I WANT TO KNOW WHAT THE HELL MADE YOU THINK THIS WAS YOUR JOB TO DO?
WHO MADE YOU THE MORAL COMPASS OF US?
HOW COULD YOU LAY DOWN WITH THE PEOPLE YOU'VE LAID DOWN WITH??
TELL ME, "DIRECTOR STARK", TELL ME, WAS IT WORTH IT??
WAS IT WORTH IT?!
TELL ME!


WELL...
...YOU'RE A SORE LOSER, CAPTAIN AMERICA.


YOU BET.
THE END.

RIP-Mia

One teaspoon of Super-AIDS in your butt...
and you're dead in three years.